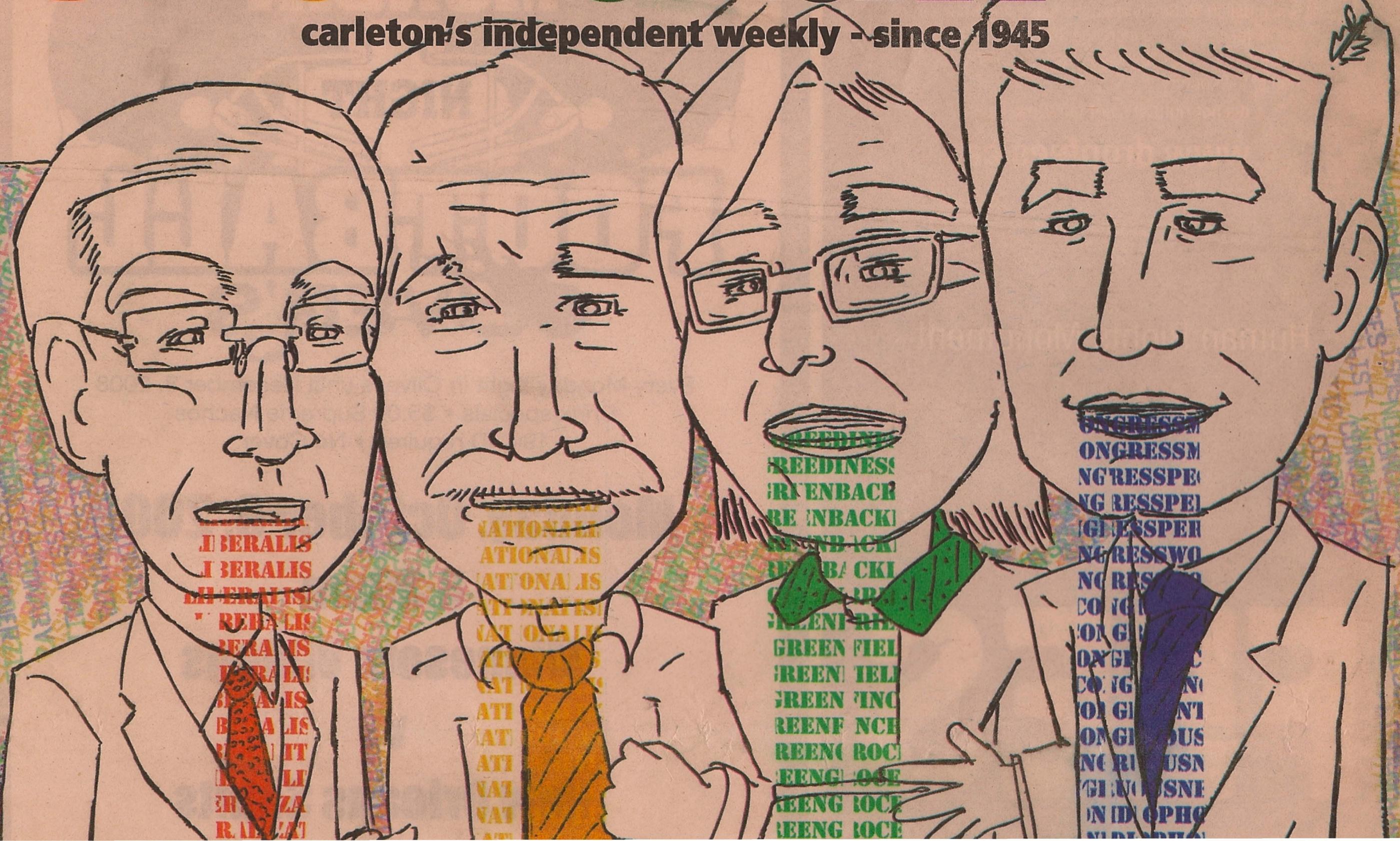


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Opinions/Editorial

Get porn out of windows

It's one thing to watch someone fondle themselves in the privacy of your own living room, but when these images are on display in the front window of your neighbourhood art gallery, people aren't just going to raise their eyebrows.

Certainly, claims can be made about whether this is legitimate art, but that isn't the point here. This erotic photography displaying full nudity has no place in a very public street-side window.

La Petite Mort Gallery is renowned for its controversial exhibits — its name translates to “little death,” the French term for orgasm — but its latest exhibit has crossed the line.

Festival X is intended to show controversial photography that gleans varied public reactions. This is the case of the window display by photographer Lynne Anderson, who has also exhibited collections of road kill and transgendered men.

It's is not the merit of art that had the community up in arms, but the location.

The gallery is along a school bus route, so as children travel back and forth each day, they get an eyeful of the sort of images that wouldn't be shown on television before midnight.

The compromise between police and the gallery owner was to partially cover the images with the red dots used to mark sold pieces inside the gallery — hardly effective as the stickers cover the bare minimum and don't take away from the image's impact. The photos need to be removed entirely.

It's true that art for art's sake needs to be respected, especially in a culturally-diverse city like Ottawa, and there is no reason that this art should be disdained.

La Petite Mort should be more considerate of its community when arranging its exhibits.

The art itself definitely has a place in the gallery, but erotica shouldn't be made into a featured public display. □

X-rated window for Festival X

BY ELIZABETH AHO

Photographs of destroyed guns and the people and architecture of the Passaic River region near New Jersey are the focus of the Festival X exhibit at La Petite Mort, a gallery downtown that celebrates artwork that "needs to be seen, and is meant to be reactionary," said art director Guy Bérubé.

The forefront of the show is a window display that is stirring up an assortment of public reactions, as well as attention from the cops.

When an erotic photography and mixed-media piece was placed in the front window of the gallery, the police came the next day, said Bérubé.

The cause for alarm is a series of photos in which the photographer is fondling herself, placed in the center of a collage of vintage Playgirl clippings of Bérubé's own, depicting men holding and flaunting erect penises.

Bérubé had initially purchased the series of black and white photographs from artist Lynne Anderson for his own possession.

He decided later that he wanted to use them in his display for Festival X.

He said the police did not like that the gallery was showing very

sexual artwork so obviously to the public.

Bérubé also added that there are families who live in apartments above the gallery and in the surrounding area, and that there is a school bus stop near La Petite Mort.

Having very provocative artwork where children often pass by puts the gallery in a difficult position. It seems that for now, Bérubé and the police have met an agreement.

The controversial body parts in the piece are now partially masked by red dot stickers, normally used in the gallery to indicate that a piece of art has been sold.

"The dots add a little something to it," Anderson said.

"It was pretty in-your-face before — now there's a little bit of mystery, like brown paper packaging on a magazine you get in the mail."

None of her erotic self-portraits have been hidden in any way, only a few of the erect penises and a couple of nipples on the magazine pictures have been covered up.

This is the first time Anderson has shown anything so erotically controversial in her artwork, but she has photographed other shocking subject matter before,



CHRISTOPHER KING

This window display from Festival X at La Petite Mort (above) is causing a stir in the community for its erotic content.

including a series on roadkill and one on transgendered men.

"With Guy's gallery, he is so willing to show things that will cause a stir. It's a shame that higher-end galleries don't expose erotic art as an art form," Anderson said.

"I [don't feel] censored by the gallery at all, I could show everything I wanted. Guy is so willing

to allow artists to be who they want to be."

The exhibit features the artwork of three other reactionary photographers, who focus on concepts such as sex, violence and urban civilization.

This unique glimpse of our culture makes Festival X an event that's enticing to all adventurous gallery-goers. □